CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
SANTA MARIA, CALIFORNIA
SPECIAL MEETING

JANUARY 12, 2006

CALL TO ORDER:
Mayor Lavagnino called the Special Meeting of the City Council to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:
MEMBERS PRESENT
Councilmembers Mariscal, Orach, Patino, Trujillo, and Mayor Lavagnino.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT
City Manager Ness, Assistant City Manager Haydon, City Attorney Trujillo, Police Chief Macagni, Director of Administrative Services Snodgrass, Director of Community Development Lindsey, Director of Recreation and Parks Posada, Deputy Fire Chief Moreno, Director of Utilities Chisam, Public Works Director/City Engineer Sweet, City Librarian Pinneli, and Chief Deputy City Clerk Perez.

COMMUNITY FORUM
Assistant City Manager Haydon explained that the community forum was to obtain input from the public on what things the public liked best about the City of Santa Maria, what areas needed improvement, and what issues, programs, and activities the public would like to see the City focus on over the next two-year budget period. He provided an overview of the City's budget process which begins with the community forum and the Council's Goal-Setting exercise, and ends with adoption of the two-year budget in June. He also explained what the budget document was and how it was used as a management tool.

Director of Administrative Services Snodgrass gave a brief overview of the City's revenues and the different City funds such as the General Fund, Enterprise Funds, and Special Revenue funds. She also explained that the General Fund was the fund that paid for public safety, general government, recreation and parks, community development and economic development; where the money came from; and what percentage of the General Fund was allocated to each. She also talked about the City's employee to population ratio which was 4.8 employees to every 1,000 residents compared to Lompoc, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo which averaged 8.5 employees per 1,000 residents.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Sweet talked about Measure D funding. Measure D, a half percent sales tax, was approved by the voters in 1989 to provide funding to Santa Barbara County and the cities in the County for transportation purposes. He highlighted the local projects that have been completed with Measure D regional funds and what the City of Santa Maria used the Measure D funds for.

Councilmember Mariscal, the City's Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) representative, talked about the $4.1 million the City received in Measure D funding that was used for preventive road maintenance and upgrades of City streets. He explained that Measure D would sunset in 2009, and SBCAG was in the process of putting a new measure on the ballot for the voters to consider renewing the half percent sales tax authorized by Measure D. He said because it was a special tax it would require 2/3's voter support. If the new measure was not approved and Measure D funding was no longer available, it would create an issue of how to continue to maintain the City's infrastructure while still providing the same level of service to City residents in all other areas. He asked the residents of Santa Maria to let him know if they were happy with how the City had been spending its Measure D funds and should it continue to spend the funds in the same way. If not, how should the money be spent?

Mayor Lavagnino commented that prior to Measure D being approved in 1989, SBCAG developed a list of 14 projects that would be completed with Measure D funding if

approved. At this time 13 of the 14 projects have been accomplished. The only one that has not been done is the widening of a portion of Highway 101 in Santa Barbara.

Dave Ericson stated he had been in the Five Cities Area this week and the roads were terrible. Santa Maria is way above them in road maintenance.

Mary Jacka said Measure D monies were very important. She said she would like to see some of the money used to provide transportation for farm workers because that was a need that was not being met. She talked about the need to add more streets to get people through the City and the need to improve Blosser Road north of Main Street.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Sweet advised her that the City Council would be taking action on January 17th to approve a contract for the widening of Blosser Road from Main Street to Taylor Street.

Councilmember Mariscal talked about the pilot program being done by the City of Santa Maria in partnership with the County of Santa Barbara to provide farm worker transportation.

Sara MacDonald indicated she was very much in favor of Measure D. She said the residents of Santa Maria were very lucky to have good roads, especially with the recent rains. She said she was seeking employment and liked the intercity transit that was available.

Joyce Lippman also voiced her support of Measure D. She said the population of Santa Maria and Santa Barbara County was getting older, and she didn't see the county having the same transportation needs as it did in 1989 when Measure D was first approved. Safe transportation needed to be provided for the elderly so they didn't have to continue to drive.

Assistant City Manager Haydon read the list of things the residents liked best about Santa Maria from the last public forum in 2002 and asked for any additional comments from the audience.

A gentleman indicated he would like to see other public meetings televised so the public could be more informed. He commended the City of Santa Maria for its openness in listening to residents so even the smallest voices were heard.

Assistant City Manager Haydon read the list of things that could be improved from the last public forum in 2002 and explained what had been done to address those issues in the last three years. He asked for input from the audience on what areas needed improvement over the next two years.

Dave Ericson stated it had been mentioned that 56 percent of the General Fund budget went for public safety and that the City had the lowest ratio of employees to population. By trying to stick to that ratio, the City would experience some breakage with serious accidents and major crimes. He said his emphasis was on public safety and the need for additional police officers. He talked about having neighborhood rangers similar to the Park Rangers to patrol neighborhoods which would free up police officers to do other things. He suggested the Police Advisory Council be opened up so more residents could participate and the meetings be open to the public. He also suggested that some of the Code Compliance Officers work evenings and weekends rather than just 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Additionally, he talked about the City being too accommodating to illegal aliens and the impacts that were being created.

Sandra Dickerson spoke about the Santa Maria Airport and the need for additional service to places other than Los Angeles.

Mary Jacka stated the City did not have enough public safety employees in police and fire. There was not enough affordable housing and the gap between low income and middle income people was getting much wider. She acknowledged that the City had made progress on its list of needs, but it was not enough. The City needed more housing for low income and really low income residents. She also talked about the

levee and the need to work on improving it. She requested the City's Disaster Plan be provided in Spanish.

Joe Gallas stated affordable housing was a very big issue and the City might want to consider building a modular home park. At some point the City is going to need to find a way to provide housing for people who could only afford to spend $100,000 to $200,000 for a house. He said it was very frustrating for those residents who do try to support the local airport. He suggested the Airport District might want to look at commercial transport and especially a way for farmers to transport their produce to Los Angeles. The City also needs to look at east/west traffic flow and another east/west transit route. He commended the City for looking for a location for a new landfill. He expressed concern about the City only having three people per fire engine when the OSHA standard was four per engine.

Councilmember Mariscal advised the audience that the City had put policies into effect that provided developers with incentives to build affording housing. He talked about some new developments in the planning stages including a mobile home park and the Mahoney Ranch property.

Marye Mariscal suggested the City look at the convention center issue again; and if that wasn't feasible, look at the possibility of a performing arts center.

Assistant City Manager Haydon asked what the public would like to see the City address over the next two-year period.

Dave Ericson indicated he wanted to see the comments he previously made in the discussion above be brought forward. He also mentioned the need for more funding for additional police officers.

Mary Jacka stated she would like to see more facilities and activities for teens. There isn't enough for teenagers to do. She would also like to see facilities for groups of 100 people or more.

David Coelho commended the Police Department for its excellent work. He said he would like to see more motorcycle officers to try to stop the people who run red lights and people who should be stopped because they are a hazard to public safety.

Joe Gallas indicated he would like to see the City improve and expand the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Joyce Lipman stated the City needed to provide more low cost senior housing.

Assistant City Manager Haydon indicated the City had received an email requesting increased funding for Code Compliance and more Code Compliance Officers and provided a copy of the email to the Chief Deputy City Clerk.

Councilmember Trujillo stated the City had been working on housing issues. The City did need more senior housing and more lower income housing. The City needed facilities that would accommodate 300 to 400 people but not necessarily a huge convention center. He said the City had been very forward thinking and had a landfill that was state of the art. The City is getting 43 percent of all the State water that comes into this area and was very forward looking when it approved State water many years ago.

Councilmember Orach talked about all the volunteers who help the Police Department and Code Compliance. He talked about the City's Neighborhood Watch Program and encouraged people to form Neighborhood Watch groups to help keep their neighborhoods safe. He suggested the Police Department be given more funding for this program.

Councilmember Patino said she also felt public safety was very important. She said she would also be pushing to increase funding for more people in Code Compliance.

Councilmember Mariscal talked about the senior low-rise apartment building and indicated he was pleased to hear that it was recently purchased and might be expanded. He talked about the projects that have been approved in Santa Maria with high density housing. He said every time the Council looks at expanding the City's workforce, it has to look at how to pay for it. The Community Development Department needs more staff and the Code Compliance Division needs to be expanded. A lot of neighborhoods are deteriorating and need improvement. He said he was encouraged that over the next two years the City would be moving forward with the Downtown Specific Plan and downtown revitalization. He would like to look at the possibility of a public-private partnership to construct a performing arts center in the downtown area. He also talked about the increased cost of the new Library.

Mayor Lavagnino stated the Councilmembers had the privilege of sitting on the City Council, but they made their decisions based on input from the community. He said he agreed that affordable housing was necessary, but the City also needed upper-end housing for executives if it wanted to attract higher paying industry to the City. Public safety was his number one issue. He said the Council had made a commitment that when a resident dialed 911, the Fire Department would be there in five minutes. When it came to protecting the residents of Santa Maria, the City Council would do what was necessary.

The Council thanked the members of the audience for attending the meeting and invited them to participate in the budget hearings.

ADJOURNMENT
There being no further business to come before the City Council at this time, the meeting was declared adjourned at 8:35 p.m. by order of Mayor Lavagnino.

APPROVED

January 25, 2006
Date

Patricia Acevedo
Chief Deputy City Clerk of the City of Santa Maria and ex officio Clerk of the City Council

ATTEST: Patricia Acevedo
Chief Deputy City Clerk

S. J. Lavagnino
Mayor of the City of Santa Maria